

How a Thousand Missionaries are Supported



The Solution of a
Hard Problem Proposed by
Seven Leaders of the
Missionary Enterprise

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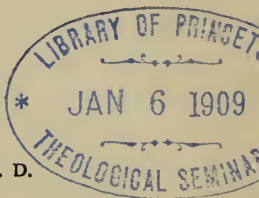
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Ecumenical Conference on
Foreign Mission (1900 :
How a thousand missionaries
are supported

How a Thousand Missionaries Are Supported

The Support of Specific Missionaries by Specific Churches
Advocated at the Ecumenical Missionary
Conference, by

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Introduction by

LUTHER D. WISHARD

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... 1901 ...

The tendency will be more and more for churches to turn over their missionary obligation to societies, for societies to turn it over to boards, for boards to turn it over to executive committees, and executive committees to secretaries, so that in the last result the chief responsibility for the great work will rest on the shoulders of a dozen men.—President Wayland.

INTRODUCTORY.

The greatest problem which confronts us for the opening century is that of distributing the missionary responsibility which has become congested in official centers.—REV. A. J. GORDON, D. D.

The Ecumenical Missionary Conference addresses here reproduced in full outline are deserving of the thoughtful reading which they will doubtless receive. They embody in every case the opinions of eminent men who have for years given the closest attention to questions of missionary finance. The methods here advocated have been thoroughly tested by the churches with which these gentlemen are actively associated. No other solution of "the greatest problem" suggested by Dr. Gordon has been as thoroughly tested by experience. This method had no stronger advocate than Dr. Gordon, who was without doubt one of the greatest missionary pastors of his generation.

This method does what no other method has been shown to do in equal measure. It immediately increases a church's missionary contributions by large percentages, and main-

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tains the increase throughout a period of years. This is illustrated by comparing the contributions of ten churches for ten years to the general missionary cause, with those of ten other churches for the same time which during the last half of the period supported their own foreign missionaries.

I. Receipts for ten years from ten churches for the general missionary cause:

First five years.	Second five years.	Increase.
\$12,377	\$12,480	\$103

II. Receipts for ten years from ten churches which during the first five years contributed to the general cause and during the following five years supported their own missionaries:

First five years.	Second five years.	Increase.
\$30,397	\$65,495	\$35,098

In the first case there is practically no increase; in the second over one hundred per cent. increase. In the first case the ten churches contributed what happened to be given in answer to a general appeal; in the second the people were moved by the pressure of a specific appeal. In the first case the churches neither assumed nor felt any special responsibility; in the second, they shared with

their missionary Board the responsibility for the support of ten missionaries.

This method has actually enlisted the salaries of more than one thousand missionaries of the American Presbyterian, Congregational, Baptist, Methodist, Christian and United Brethren Churches, of the Canadian Methodist Church, and of the Church of England.

The method has so commended itself to the pastors and members of every one of the ninety-nine churches visited by the writer since the Forward Movement was inaugurated in America that every one, without a single exception, has pledged the salary of one or more missionaries. The amounts pledged represent an increase of more than two hundred per cent. over previous annual contributions. The entire number of salaries provided by these churches is one hundred and fourteen. In addition to these, twelve salaries were pledged by individuals.

The American churches struggled with the problem of missionary finance all through last century and succeeded in enlisting only one-tenth of a cent a day, or about thirty-five cents a year, from the average church member. Is it

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not worth while hearkening to the counsel of the business men and pastors who speak through the following pages, and try for at least the first year of the century a method which has increased the per capita missionary contributions of the members of ninety-nine churches to over three dollars a year ?

An interesting question is suggested by the facts embodied in the title and discussion. May not the method which has secured the support of one thousand missionaries provide for twenty-five thousand? If so, the financial problem of the world's evangelization is solved; for in the judgment of conservative and reliable authorities twenty-five thousand missionaries properly distributed can present and fully explain the message of Christianity to every creature during this generation.

LUTHER D. WISHARD.

287 Fourth Avenue, New York City.

March 18, 1901.

THE METHOD ENDORSED BY CHURCH COUNCILS AND MISSIONARY SOCIETIES

BAPTIST.—Churches and individuals shall be encouraged to contribute such sums as shall meet definite needs of the work of the Union, as for example, the work of a missionary.—Action of the American Baptist Missionary Union, 1899.

CONGREGATIONAL.—Resolved, that the Forward Movement be inaugurated to develop interest in foreign missions among the churches, and especially to secure the adoption of missionaries by churches, individuals and families.—Action of the American Board, 1898.

CANADIAN METHODIST. — The Movement wisely guided will result in stimulating and developing widespread interest in missionary work among young people, and in securing substantial additions to the income of the Board.—Action of the Missionary Society of the Methodist Church of Canada.

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PRESBYTERIAN.—It is hoped that not a few men and women of wealth may see it to be their duty to have their representatives on the foreign field, and that congregations may also see their way clear to support a missionary. More than five hundred of the seven hundred missionaries were so supported before this special effort (the Forward Movement) was inaugurated.—Reports of the Foreign Board adopted by the General Assembly, 1898 and 1899.

CHURCH OF ENGLAND.—During the last three years of its first century, which closed April, 1899, the Church Missionary Society conducted a three years enterprise for the purpose of promoting a definite and substantial advance in foreign missions. Individuals, families and congregations were asked to adopt one or more missionaries of their own. At the last report three hundred and seventy-one missionaries were thus supported.

Address by

JOHN H. CONVERSE, Esq.

*Member of the Advisory Committee of the Pres-
byterian Forward Movement in
Foreign Missions.*

Systematic beneficence can best be promoted and the interest of the people can best be aroused and maintained if they have a definite object in which their interest is centered. The interest of the pastor also can be largely increased if he knows that he has a fellow worker on the foreign field.

Let us carefully define what we mean by the support of missionaries by churches. It is not that a church shall undertake this work without any relation to its missionary board; it simply means that a church shall pledge itself to contribute annually a sum equal to the support of a foreign missionâry, or a dozen if it pleases. It means that the supervision of the work of the missionary shall be centered in the board.

In order to carry this out, the church must

be organized into a missionary society. Pledges should be asked for each year. The people should be invited to make their payments annually, monthly, weekly, or as their convenience may dictate. Permit me to mention a concrete example of this method. I refer to a church in the suburbs of Philadelphia. Its annual contributions to foreign missions were about one hundred and forty dollars a year up to twelve years ago. The pastor persuaded the people to consider the question of supporting a foreign missionary. Pledges were asked, with the result that twenty-five hundred dollars were subscribed the first year. Instead of sending one missionary, two were sent. The work has been steadily maintained for twelve years, and the increase in the contributions of the church to the mission cause has been thirty-fold.

In the Presbyterian Church, with over seven hundred missionaries, nearly six hundred are specifically supported. In the Congregational body the proportion is similar. It would seem as though the problem had already been solved, and if there is any significance in the leadings of divine providence, this is the

method to awaken in our people an interest in foreign missions, to draw out systematic benevolence, and to engage the prayers of all of Christ's followers in this most important work.

Address by

SAMUEL B. CAPEN, Esq.

*President of the American Board of Commissioners
for Foreign Missions*

After weighing all objections at their full value, I think it still remains true that there is a work to be done by individual churches in assuming the support of individual missionaries. One of the greatest needs of the hour is to enlarge the gifts of our churches. How shall we enlarge the gifts? I reply, by increasing the number of the givers. One of the best ways to do this is to make this work more interesting by giving the individual churches their own specific and definite work. I believe this plan has the following strong advantages:

First.—It makes the missionary problem seem more capable of solution. To many minds this problem seems now so vast, the numbers to be reached so immense, that they are paralyzed and can do nothing. When you suggest, however, that if thousands of the

churches at home will each take a field of its own and cultivate it, the whole heathen world will soon be covered and cared for, there is a *definiteness* about the suggestion which seems practical.

Second.—It will reduce the waste of money. The pastor of one of our strongest churches whose gifts to foreign missions have been very small, told me recently that the men in his church gave away a great deal of money, but they liked to give it to things they could see. The things that were out of sight were unreal to them. As a result their gifts often go to support enterprises of doubtful value and are practically wasted. If the proverb, that "Not only is he ideal who is doing nothing, but he is ideal who might be better employed," is true, it is equally true that, "Not only is he wasting who throws away his money, but he is wasting who might use his money to better advantage."

Third.—The indifferent are reached by this individual plan of work, because they become interested in some person who in a very definite and real sense is their representative at the front. There is nothing clearer in all the his-

tory of the past and present than that men become interested, not so much in abstract ideas as in individuals who represent those ideas. The interest centers first upon the man, then upon his work. It is the Bible story over again: great events, great changes revolving around a person. Let our churches have someone at the post of danger whose suffering and needs they will make theirs, and there will be no lack of sympathy and practical support.

Fourth.—The indifferent are to be reached by this new plan of a definite responsibility because they will become more intelligent. Ignorance in our churches is the mother of much of the present indifference. What many in our churches need is not more appeals, but more facts; not more exhortation, but more education. Suppose now a church at home becomes responsible for some individual missionary, what is the result? If you have a boy in the army do you not follow every day the division which contains his regiment? Every item of news that has any bearing upon the country, the people, the forces opposed, is of supreme interest to you. In a similar way when our churches become interested in some

missionary at the front, they are going to study his field, the conditions of the people, what they believe, how they live, what the gains and losses are from time to time. In other words, we shall have an increased number of intelligent Christians, and they will become interested, not only in the country, but in the field which he is occupying as their field. It will become a part of their parish for which they will be gladly responsible. The missionary may die, but the field will remain and their interest will remain also.

May I give you an illustration which seems to me to prove the truth of that for which I have been arguing. It is of a church with which I am very familiar. It is in a neighborhood where the church-going habit is greatly neglected. The church itself was started a few years ago as a mission enterprise, and almost all of its members are poor. Its gifts a year ago for the American Board were but seventy dollars, but last autumn a young lady who had grown up in the church and who was greatly beloved, gave herself to the foreign mission work. It was out of love to her that these people in their poverty subscribed the whole

five hundred dollars needed for her support. So far from their generous gifts reducing the interest in other directions, it has increased it. The contributions to one of our home societies have increased thirty per cent. over last year, and to another over sixty per cent.

Yes! In developing this new plan of individual churches supporting individual missionaries, I believe intelligence will take the place of ignorance, and interest will conquer indifference. The plan ought not to be despised even if it were only a wise method of providing more money for saving men who need Christ, and the education and civilization which Christ always brings. But it is far more than this: it is a plan which will permanently educate the church in the grandest work of the century.

Address by

LUCIEN C. WARNER, Esq.

Chairman of the Advisory Committee of the Congregational Forward Movement in Foreign Missions.

We have in our denomination over five hundred churches which spent last year over six thousand dollars on an average in support of their own parish work. An inquiry concerning the foreign mission contributions of these churches reveals the fact that one which spent over five thousand upon its congregational work, gave only fifty to foreign missions, another gave twenty-five, another two hundred and fifty. If we could so influence our churches that the average would be brought up to the record made by one-tenth of the five hundred which are doing their best, we would much more than double the receipts for missions. We have been trying to increase the receipts from some of these churches by laying upon them a definite responsibility. You know what results from solely depending upon spontane-

ous collections. If it happens to be a fine Sunday and the minister is in fine condition, he may get a collection of five hundred dollars. If it happens to rain, or the minister, from being over-worked the preceding week, is a little dull, we get a collection of two hundred. Now the needs of the foreign work do not change from year to year in this way. It takes the same amount of money to carry on the same work this year that it did last. We can't support the foreign work with five hundred one year and two hundred another. The church would not try to support its pastor in that way. It did not cut down his salary one-half because it happened to rain on two or three Sundays during the year; no more should we cut down our gifts to foreign missions or any other benevolent work because of rainy Sundays.

Note the effect of having a church provide for a definite missionary, or for a definite work. It may be the support of a college such as the Broadway Tabernacle recently took for its special responsibility. We laid this responsibility upon that church, and the church will not be any more likely to cut down its contributions from year to year than it will to vary the

salary of its own pastor. What we want to promote in our churches is such a feeling of responsibility that each individual will understand that it is not a matter of whether or not he happens to go to church the day the collection is taken; it is not a matter of what the sermon is, but it is a matter of duty, of system and of conscientious communion with God. He knows each year just what he has to do. If we can build up this custom of systematic benevolence, this feeling of responsibility among our churches and individual members, we shall largely increase the gifts for missions.

Address by
WILTON MERLE SMITH, D. D.

*Pastor Central Presbyterian Church, New
York City.*

Seven years ago the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor of our church requested the Session to be permitted to send a missionary into the home or foreign field. The Session said we would better unite with them and send a missionary who would represent the entire church. In about six months we had a missionary in the Kentucky mountains in the village of Hyden, sixty miles from the railroad. The whole county is among the mountains. There is not a single church in the county with a settled pastor and a regular service; nor was there a Sunday school, although there was a population of about five thousand. The result has been that within six years we have absolutely changed the face of that town. We have built a beautiful little church costing twenty-five hundred dollars; we have Christian Endeavor societies; a large

Sunday school and five out-schools, and Hyden Academy. Very many district school houses in that country are presided over by those who have been educated at our academy. The teachers go out to the little settlements among the mountains and establish Sunday schools. The work we are doing there is evangelizing the whole county. The whole town is changed; sidewalks have been built everywhere; new houses are going up. At times the principal business in Hyden consists in boarding students who come from far and wide to our academy.

But that did not satisfy our church. They said, "We must have a missionary on the foreign field." In 1895 we sent a missionary to Peking under our Foreign Board. His wife became seriously ill and they had to return. We had spent twenty-five hundred dollars in that venture, and it all seemed fruitless. We did not propose, however, to be deterred by the first failure, and in 1898 we sent out two young men, graduates of Yale and Princeton. They have been studying the language ever since. They are now preparing to go farther inland to found a station.

Last fall they wrote home: "Can't you send a medical missionary?" We found one who was one of the brightest young men in the Presbyterian hospital. He said, "I am willing to go, but my brother is just graduating in theology and he wants to go to China," and so we sent them both. They and their wives left for China last September, and are now with our other missionaries in Nanking. A sister of one of the young men whom we first sent out, having joined the party at her own charges, desires to be considered one of the missionaries of our church, so we have in Nanking seven foreign missionaries almost ready to preach the Gospel to the heathen. We have already selected our station, about two hundred miles from Nanking, in An Hui province.

Has this been a hard thing to do? Not at all. Eleven years ago we were giving about two hundred and fifty dollars to foreign missions. Our annual offering for the general work of the board was more than ten times that last November. Our annual offering for the general fund is steadily increasing, notwithstanding the large expense which we have

incurred in the support of our special missionaries.

The interest is so great in our church that when special demands come up there is always someone to volunteer. For instance, we wanted a church at Hyden. A man said, "I will give a thousand dollars;" another man said, "I would like to buy the parsonage;" and another said, "When you are ready for a hospital in China, I want to build the hospital." Anything that our missionaries want they can have, and have it gladly.

I have been asked what this all costs us. We took our offering last Sunday for our own missionary scheme, amounting to between five and six thousand dollars, for our special work. I felt a little skeptical about our getting what we needed. It was the largest offering we had ever asked for, but we had every bit of it on the plate; and one man came to me afterward and said, "You want another special missionary at Hyden. I was waiting, thinking I would take that six hundred. I find you have got all the money without it." I replied, "We will find use for your six hundred somewhere else."

One of the most important things about it all is that it imparts such tremendous interest to the home church. All the missionaries have kodaks; they send home pictures which are thrown on the screen at our monthly missionary meetings, which are the most interesting and invariably the largest attended prayer meetings of the entire year. The result has been that the interest has reflected upon our own spiritual growth, and I do not believe there is a member of our church who does not rejoice that we have our five missionaries in Hyden and seven in China. These missionaries have been with us. Two of them worked with us six months before they went away; the other two worked three months. We know them. Our children know their faces. We have their pictures on the screen, and their letters are read at every monthly missionary meeting. The whole scheme has worked so successfully in our own church that I wish it were multiplied a thousand times in other churches. Of course, we do it through our home and foreign boards; that is the only way to do it.

Address by

W. C. KING, Esq.

Chairman Forward Movement Committee, Highland Baptist Church, Springfield, Mass.

The average individual is too busy to become acquainted with the whole missionary field. He can, however, become acquainted with a single station or a single missionary. From this point his interest grows until it reaches other stations, other lands and other people. I believe in special churches supporting special missionaries for this very reason.

A word with reference to the effect of the support of an individual upon the home church: Last year in connection with the visits of some of the members of our board to our church, it was suggested that we support a foreign missionary. We were twenty-seven thousand dollars in debt, and our people at first said, "We can't do it." The amount that we raised the year before was only ninety-six dollars, and to raise eight hundred dollars for

a foreign missionary seemed impossible. Everyone of our standing committee said, "No," excepting one. It was decided, however, to recommend it to the church. The church agreed to undertake it, and a committee was appointed to raise the money. We got up a little circular with a picture of the proposed missionary, and a few words about him and his work. We sent this in a letter with a subscription card and a stamped envelope. The result was that nearly nine hundred dollars were subscribed, and today we have our missionary on the foreign field.

Immediately following that, seven thousand dollars were subscribed toward clearing the debt of twenty-seven thousand. A year ago we came to the annual meeting eleven hundred dollars behind on current expenses. Last year we were only one hundred dollars behind, and that was subscribed in less than five minutes.

Address by

J. Y. DOBBINS, D. D.

Pastor Methodist Episcopal Church, Montclair, N.J.

The people of the church in which I minister are brought into immediate relation to a particular person and to a certain portion of the missionary field. Our interest is not now as it used to be, mediate, but immediate; and instead of having our interest fostered only by printed statements of missionary work, we read the letters which are written us by our own missionary representatives, one of them in Burmah, and the other representing us in Montana, where our church has erected several buildings. These letters are brimming with the missionary spirit, and the reading of them makes an impression which long remains in the hearts of our people.

I wish to emphasize the point already made by other speakers, that this direct relation to an individual and a certain portion of the missionary field, does not narrow, but rather broadens our church life. It is because we

have become related to individuals who are in the mission fields at home and abroad that we are interested everywhere. The church which has no interest in some particular place is in great danger of not having interest in the world at large.

Further, it has been a delight to us to find that individual members of the church have entered into definite relations with a missionary. A member of our church who makes her living by her needle, supports one of the most eloquent evangelists in Northern China.

Address by
JACOB CHAMBERLAIN, D. D.
*Missionary of the Reformed Church in
India.*

We missionaries believe that the time has come for many churches to support two pastors, one for the home field and another for the foreign. I have tried this upon the foreign field when the little church which I gathered in India was about to call its first pastor. I laid before them the fact, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," and that church instead of calling one pastor called two; one for themselves, the other for the regions beyond, and those two pastors were ordained at the same time. The same hands were placed on their heads as co-pastors of that church. What can be done at the forefront by the feeble churches, can certainly be done by the churches at home.

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